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Contact: Micah Swafford
202-225-2132

Bill Includes More Medical Research Dollars for OK

Washington, D.C. -- At the request of Congressman Ernest Istook (R-OK), the Labor Health and Human Services Appropriations bill marked up today includes a 300% increase for medical research in EPSCoR states, of which Oklahoma is one.

“Congressman Istook has recognized and taken upon himself to address a problem that has existed for over two decades, but that few have done anything about. If successful, this will have more impact on Oklahoma than almost anything else done in Congress this year,” said **Dr. J. Donald Capra, president of the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation** in Oklahoma City. “If the funding reaches the level Istook is working for, Oklahoma would likely receive over one-third more funding for medical research meaning more high quality jobs and an improvement in the whole process of applying for all biomedical grants.”

Dr. Joseph Ferretti, the Provost of the OU Health Science Center also praised Istook, “Representative Istook recognized the inequity of science funding to various states which historically received only 4% of NIH funds but have 20% of the nation's population, and has taken bold steps to correct this situation. Increasing the EPSCoR funding will ensure that these 18 states, which include Oklahoma, realize greater potential in research. The end result of Representative Istook's support and visionary leadership on this issue will ultimately provide an increase in the number of high tech jobs, improved student access to better education and research experiences, diversity in the technological experiences available, and the promotion of our overall science infrastructure and competitiveness of each state.”

EPSCoR states receive less funding per capita than other states for medical research. Oklahoma currently receives only \$45 per capita in medical research, compared to an average of \$258 per capita in non-EPSCoR states.

The EPSCoR program (Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research) provides a pool of research monies for which only EPSCoR states can apply.

“My goal is still to bring the special medical research pool up to \$200 million,” said Istook. **“But this increase is a long-needed breakthrough.”**

“And as good as this is for Oklahoma, it’s also good deal for all taxpayers,” said Istook. **“Oklahoma offers top-quality research facilities and a low cost of living, giving taxpayers more research for each dollar instead of paying for high overhead in other states.”**